

But in spite of the desolation and depression that reigns in this unfortunate country, travellers owe something to the conservatism of the Turk, which has prevented any "modernization" of the Holy Land. The impression left on one's mind is, as a recent writer has put it, that it has made the "human facts" of our Lord's life "more a memory than a belief."

IN THE NURSERY DAYS.

The students, who, for the most part, are readers of this Magazine, have of necessity to deal with children emancipated from the nursery. Still I think that some considerations upon the infant period will not be out of place. In that hope, and also in the anticipation of a reasonable forbearance with the views here expressed, I should like to touch on some points, with regard to education prior to the school days, that have come under my observation. It will not be denied that education begins in the nursery. The training, or the want of it, in the early days seems to me likely to help, or hinder, the later work. Assuming, as we ought to do, that the parent, or the person, entrusted with the infant life is anxious to do the best possible for the child, and to lead gradually to the opening out of his mind and lay the basis of future development, one cannot very well begin too soon. It is astonishing at how early a period little traits manifest themselves that if neglected may lead to such serious results, and that if encouraged may be of the utmost value in after life. Every day there is work to be done in the nursery, work of modification, cultivation, and correction.

The one thing we might place first, that is most important during infant life, and throughout life, is the early cultivation of the habit to obey. Obedience is a capacity, and where the capacity is not properly trained it is all the more difficult in later life for the adult to control himself wisely. More than anything else obedience is likely to make for happiness

in the home life. The child who disobeys, or is allowed to dispute every order, has the power to make the home most unhappy. Disobedience is a very serious fault, and the desire to have his own way seems an inherent one, so that the earlier it is tackled the better it will be. Obviously the more will power a child has got the more difficult it will be to teach him to submit to control, therefore all the more necessity to attempt this from the beginning. No one desires to weaken the will power of a child, but I contend that to teach it implicit obedience will really strengthen that power, because the process naturally puts it upon a nobler level. It is quite possible to make a child consciously obey as early as seven or eight months old. The development of children varies, few things are more variable, but the infant, who can neither talk nor walk, can understand the word "no," and it should always be uttered firmly yet kindly, and never angrily. This leads to the point that a command should never be given thoughtlessly. Even an infant can appreciate something of justice and injustice in an order, and the reasonableness of it. But obedience to an order once given should be insisted upon. A child prevented from doing a thing one day must not be allowed to do it the next day. The same things must always be prohibited or allowed, unless there should be an obvious alteration of circumstances which will usually appeal also to the child's mind, because he is a very reasonable animal. Injustice grates on him instinctively, and inconsistency confuses him. In this connection the wisdom of changing the line of thought is very apparent. You give your order and there it should end. But lest the child should criticise, argue, or fret, turn his attention to something else; the lure seldom fails.

To be able to follow the working of the little mind needs the most constant watchfulness and sympathy. Nurses may be here to-day and gone to-morrow, but the parents are always there, and should not allow the little charges entrusted to them to be wholly looked after by others. No one can fitly take the place of the loving parent, and no one can, because the parent is the final law of the child, better recognise when the little one is to be reprimanded, encouraged, or guided. Harshness to children is always a mistake. Sometimes one needs to be sharp with a child, but to be harsh to him wounds his tender little mind, and we do not

know what damage we may inflict. A child very early manifests affection. That ought not to be checked. Nothing is more delightful than the loving manner in which a child, say of eighteen months, will treat the little baby in arms.

One should be very much on the alert not to spoil a child. Too much attention may, with the best possible intention, but nevertheless mistakenly, be paid to him. One often sees a child who is playing happily by himself begin to cry directly some one comes into the room who has been in the constant habit of making much of him. It is only natural that a parent might feel proud of this, or even if the child cries to go to his nurse, be gratified that he is "so fond" of her; but either way the result does not conduce to the comfort or happiness of the home, and it is bad for the child. It is right and proper that the little ones should have "the children's hour" after the tea things are put away and before bed time comes, and if the father is able to join in he should esteem it a privilege and a duty to do so. Then the children will probably get plenty of attention paid to them. They will bring out their toys, romp and crawl about, and have "a good time." But it is a mistake to allow the same assiduous, almost slavish, devotion to be always shown all the day long by those who have the more constant oversight of the children. To let children expect permanent personal attention is to make a rod for one's own back.

Many people try to cram too much into a child's life. A child must be led gradually and slowly, and its mind formed rather that it may assimilate the best as it goes along, than that it may see and do everything. The child mind cannot hold more than so much, and it is unwise to cram it. Some parents seem to delight in the precocity of their children. But there is a serious danger in regarding this with admiration. A mother will naturally treasure things up in her heart, and a father may take a joy in recording the progress of his little ones and retailing their "*bon mots*." That is all right and proper if he can get an appreciative audience—not always so easy; but the tendency to push on the child should be guarded against. It is a failing in parents to like to find their children doing and saying things at an earlier age than the children of other parents do or did. You hear mothers discussing these matters sometimes. "My boy walked at nine months." "My girl said 'hippopotamus' at eighteen

months." "My boy had seven teeth at ten months." The poor mother whose boy could not yet walk at thirteen months feels that her little one is behind hand; his three teeth at eight months seem feeble; his inability to pronounce a word of five syllables at twenty months spells backwardness. On the other hand the mother whose boy develops more quickly than another's is unduly elated, and already anticipates a judgeship or a peerage for him. The truth is that in all these things the development of children varies, and if your boy cannot walk months later than your friend's it does not follow that you must force him. The wise parent is satisfied that the child walks when he is able to carry his weight without harm to his system and growth, and uses words and language as soon as he understands their meaning and application. What more can any sensible parent want? But if the child early develops, we ought not to let ourselves get into the habit of making a little show of him, "putting him through his paces," so to speak, not for any real need of that in the course of his training, but to gratify one's pride and amuse one's relatives and friends. Let the child be natural in the quiet of the home, and also in the presence of admiring grandparents, uncles, cousins and aunts. How often do we see a jovial circle surround the children, laughing at and retailing their quaint remarks and acts, egging them on to greater displays of their forwardness, and making the budding mind dizzy with noise and excitement. It is not healthy for the children; and as it is a delight to study the beauties of young life, let us do it with judicious restraint. While on this topic, would it not be wise of the parents and others who are daily with the child, to avoid laughing at every frolic of the little mind or body. A child knows quite well at an early age when he is making fun, and will quickly learn tricks and ways, that cannot readily be eradicated, to secure the laughter.

Of course a child must learn to read. It is very desirable to let him pick up his letters, while still in the nursery, quite unconsciously. Learning to read is one of the most troublesome things when a child goes to school without having mastered the elementary part of the task, and it is a great drawback to him. From bricks and books he can gradually "slip into print" without grievous mental effort on his part or trial to his teacher. The process, if begun early, is not

exhausting to the little brain. By a judicious use of toys and suitable picture books, a child soon associates whole words with the names of animals and things. In regard to his picking up numerical knowledge, he should not be taught to say "one, two, three," and so on, but as Mrs. Boole explains in her useful book, "The Logic of Arithmetic," he should be taught to count with the articles always before him, thus, "one step, two steps, three steps." It is just as easy to the parent to put it in that way as in any other, and it gives the child from the beginning an idea of number without the conscious effort of learning. It gives the idea of the grouping of things, and that the number applies to various things and not to one in particular. A child of tender age will be able to know, if he has four, five, or six toys which are alike, whether one or more are missing, and will search for it with the most astonishing persistence.

Habits of tidiness should be impressed without delay. It is surprising how early in life a child can be trained to be tidy, to keep his toys in their proper places after use. It might easily be the last item in the "children's hour" for them to put away their toys. Insensibly, in this way, the child gains the habit, but once begun the practice should not be dropped, and the toys should always be "tidied."

The habit, so easily contracted and so hard to get rid of, that of talking about a child in his hearing, is very harmful. There should be no confusion of authority in the child's ear and mind between his parents. To him they should be one law if not one person. The effort should be made for all those entrusted with the close care of the child to know what the others are doing, so that the law of the nursery is not weakened by a variety of interpretations and pronouncements. There should be no discussion about the children in their hearing as to what they are to do or not to do, and so on. It is really better to let an order by one parent pass, even if the other does not quite agree with it, provided it is not one involving serious consequences, than to countermand it or argue about it while the child is listening. It is astonishing how a child follows conversation. It will not be disputed that he understands more of what is said than we imagine. His ability to pick up the points of conversation is far in advance of his own vocabulary. I have been struck with the intelligent following of conversation by a child hardly

able to talk. That being so, how careful we should be that what he hears is all to the one sound purpose. The father—without meaning any harm, rather the reverse—may most easily upset the mother's arrangements. The mother has most to do with the child, and the thoughtful father will express his views as to his training to her in private, and not argue the point—if argument is needed a premise I am not willing to admit—in the hearing of the child. The father should be careful that, in a pardonable anxiety to enter into the home life of the children's affairs and play, he does not introduce a rift into the lute. A little consideration would be better for the child, and the mother would have the stronger grasp of her greater share in the personal work of training. Among all those who have the care of the same child there should be frequent consultation. The mother's law, approved of by the father or modified by him, should be taught to the nurse and the rest, and insisted upon.

Don't pander to "baby talk." It is inevitable that a child should manufacture his own "babyisms." What can be prettier than his efforts to pronounce words? He glorifies language by his delicious failures; and indeed it is well not to discourage originality. A child who invents his own names for things, so long as he understands the proper names, need not be pulled up sharply. But the parents need not drop into "babyisms," but might just as well talk good English even to a baby. For instance, a child will more readily say "gee gee" than horse, "moo" than cow, and "bow wow" than dog. They appeal more to the child of course, and it is very easy to see that he learns, parallel with them, the proper names. Any child told it once or twice, when asked "What does cow say?" will reply "Moo." To him "moo" implies cow, and he knows what a cow is, though on seeing one he will say "moo." A child of normal intelligence does not seem to be confused by the transition, though at first thought it might seem to us to be likely to confuse him. But how objectionable it is to hear the parents and others on their part manufacture and use silly gabble, such as "diddums," "pitty ickle sing," &c., and mispronounce and babyfy every word, in the misconception that it is easier for the child to understand.

Why should a child be mentally coddled? Try to make him plucky from the beginning. Try to get him to laugh

rather than cry at his little tumbles and mishaps. One need not, in aiming at so high an ideal, fall into the error of "Spartanising" him, or neglecting loving acts and words. But it is wonderful how quickly he will assimilate the idea, whereas if he is too much pitied and petted every time he bumps his head, it will tend to diminish his natural strength of mind.

Example! I have left that to the last. Is it not of the utmost value to always set a good example to the child? "Like father, like son," just so; but more from example than heredity, I fear. A child may learn to be courteous and gentle (I don't mean "namby-pamby") more thoroughly from the example of his parents than from any amount of advice. By all means preach, but try to "practice what you preach," and remember that "example is better than precept." Indeed, what is the use of giving advice if a child sees that you don't act in accordance with it yourself? None at all. How can children be expected to be good-mannered, nice with one another, gentle, thoughtful, and to learn to control their tempers, when they see their parents, whom they look up to most in their little world, bad-tempered, quarrelling, rude, and inconsiderate? Think the child does not notice? Away with it. He does notice, far more than you give him credit for. No, parents cannot be too careful. It is possible one is setting parents a very severe task; but parentage has its responsibilities that should not be lightly undertaken. With the best of intentions the parent, the guardian, the nurse, the teacher, cannot always succeed, but at least we can try.

That I have had my wife's assistance in writing these notes almost goes without saying, but I wish to record it.

Sunny Hill,
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HINTS ON TEACHING A LANGUAGE.

Perhaps what I wish to say is superfluous—it certainly has cost me a good deal—but that is going from the point. Love of a language and a desire to create a love of the same in those it has been my privilege to teach have led me to think about ways and means of imparting the same, and to observe closely the needs of my pupils in order to meet them in the best possible way.

I have written this epistle many times in my mind, as the occasions of observation presented themselves, and yet it seems difficult to me to express myself in brief in such a manner as not to weary you with things you already know.

"There is one language I delight in," and which I think and speak in spite of myself! That seems to me the most suitable attitude for the teacher of a language; certainly it is necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with its phraseology and pronunciation.

Professor Gouin's method, used as it should be, fills a long-felt vacuum, but from personal experience I may say that I have seen it so terribly abused by misuse as not to be recognised, and to fail entirely in its object. It is not enough to teach children as sheep, giving the same "series" simultaneously to thirty or more pupils, whose ages range between ten and eighteen years. But you will not fall into such an error, I am sure!

I will not dwell on *how* to teach as you are well-informed, and *what* to teach you must judge for yourselves. I know that your first desire is "to arouse the interest" of your pupils in the language you wish to teach them. May I say a few words to you about that object? I have found that children who profess to "hate" a language when they have only known it through a "grammar," may soon be found to delight in it when it is taught to them orally; a few weeks may suffice to bring about this change of opinion.

But interest, as you know, is often aroused by a novelty, and the impulse may soon die a sudden death unless it is kept up by some stimulus. This may be sustained in